

ON NON-MARINE MOLLUSCA FROM AN EARLY NEOLITHIC  
INTERMENT AT CUXTON, KENT.

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IN 1907 an early Neolithic interment was discovered whilst quarrying for chalk in the large chalk-pit belonging to Messrs. Trechmann, Weeks, & Co. Through the kindness of Mr. G. E. Dibley, F.G.S., I was informed of this by Mr. J. G. Wilson, the manager of the works, to whom I am greatly indebted for kind help in examining the interment and in obtaining the material. The grave had been made by a slight excavation in the overlying scarp drift. The body had been placed in the excavation and then covered with a large quantity of flints, obviously picked from the surface of the ground. This layer of flints was from 12 to 18 inches thick. On this a layer of chalk had been spread, and probably, though this is not certain, the surface soil had then been replaced. During the succeeding centuries there had been a certain amount of soil creep from the hill above, so that there was about 3 feet of soil above the chalk layer. On examining the layer of stones I was surprised to find large numbers of shells, which I carefully collected, and I also took away a quantity of the finer material between the stones for washing. It should be noted that in many cases the interstices between the stones were free from earth, and a deposit of carbonate of lime, derived from percolating water, had been deposited on the surfaces of the flint. No less than thirty-one species were obtained, viz. :—

*Limax arborum*, 6 examples.

*Agriolimax agrestis*, 8 examples.

*Arion* sp., abundant.

*Vitrea Seharffi*, common.

*V. cellaria*, common.

*V. crystallina*, common.

*V. nitidula*, 5 examples.

*V. pura*, 5 examples.

*V. radiatula*, 1 example.

*Vallonina pulchella*, 1 example.

*V. excentrica*, common.

*V. costata*, common.

*Aenanthinula aculeata*, 4 examples.

*Helicella cartusiana*, 12 examples.

*H. itala*, common.

*Hygromia hispida*, 10 examples.

*Pyramidula rotundata*, common.

*Helix nemoralis*, 5 examples.

*Helicigona lupicida*, 4 examples.

*H. arbustorum*, 1 example.

*Cochlicopa lubrica*, 5 examples.

*Clausilia laminata*, 5 examples.

*C. bidentata*, 5 examples.

*Jamnia muscorum*, common.

*J. cylindracea*, 4 examples.

*Vertigo pygmaea*, 14 examples.

*V. minutissima*, 4 examples.

*Cæcilianella acicula*, common.

*Carychium minimum*, 14 examples.

*Pomatius elegans*, abundant.

*Acicula lineata*, 2 examples.

Several ova of a large species of land mollusca were also found.

The occurrence of *Helicella cartusiana* is noteworthy, since it furnishes additional proof of its former abundance in West Kent. It is now known in a fossil state in West Kent, from Otford, Exedown, Greenhithe, Northfleet, and Cuxton.

*Vertigo minutissima* and *Jamnia cylindracea* are rarely found in a fossil state, whilst *Acicula lineata* is extremely rare as a fossil in

Kent. There are four species extremely abundant in the neighbourhood at the present time which are absent—*Helix aspersa*, *Helicella cantiana*, *H. caperata*, and *H. virgata*.

It is extremely difficult to account for the presence of such a large number of mollusca in this situation. After careful consideration I think the explanation is this. The grave was not covered in immediately. The body was covered with stones and then some little time elapsed before the chalk was placed on top, and the heap of stones became a place of refuge for the shells in the immediate vicinity.

The carnivorous *Cæcilianellas*, *Vitreas*, and *Arions* would naturally be attracted, and it is noteworthy that all these are very common. When the layer of chalk was spread over the grave the shells were trapped, there to await for centuries the pick of the quarryman.

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